

# **Committee on International Relations**

## **Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats**

### **Statement of Chairman Elton Gallegly**

#### **U.S.-European Relationship: Opportunities and Challenges**

March 8, 2006

Today, the Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats is holding a hearing on challenges and opportunities in the relations between the United States and Europe.

I am pleased to report that the transatlantic relationship has improved significantly in the past year. I believe much credit should go to President Bush and members of his administration, especially Secretary of State Rice, for their hard work in developing both stronger personal relationships and policy initiatives that have gone a long way to getting the relationship back on solid ground.

Not only is the overall tone much better, but, more importantly, American and European leaders are working together to develop a common approach and practical solutions to difficult problems.

Regarding Iran, we are all aware of the close cooperation between the EU-3 countries and the United States regarding Tehran's nuclear enrichment program. Although difficult negotiations and tough decisions lie ahead, there is no doubt that the attention of the world is focused on Iran's behavior instead of divisions between America and Europe.

Likewise, in the Balkans, the U.S. and our European allies are working together diplomatically and on the ground to maintain peace and promote a permanent political settlement in both Bosnia and Kosovo.

And in the former Soviet states, Europe and the United States share the same values and are pursuing similar strategies to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law. I would particularly like to mention the

efforts of individual European countries, the EU and the United States in helping to establish freedom and democracy in Belarus. Both Congress and the European Parliament are watching the upcoming presidential elections in that country closely and both bodies have passed similar resolutions calling on free and fair elections.

I would also like to commend the European Union for its decision, at least in the near term, not to lift its arms embargo against China. We should not forget that one year ago the question was not whether the EU would lift its embargo, but if it would happen in the first-half or second-half of 2005.

Certainly, significant points of contention remain in U.S. - European relations and we should not avoid an honest discussion of these issues. Most notably, there are differences regarding the type of tactics that need to be used in fighting the global war on terrorism.

However, these differences of opinion should not obscure the fact that the transatlantic relationship is based on common values and that both Europe and America can accomplish much more in the world, from fighting terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction to spreading democracy, by working together.

I look forward to hearing from Ambassador Fried on these issues and I will now turn to Mr. Wexler for any remarks he may wish to make.